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Occupational Employment and Wages for Police and Firefighters in Massachusetts' Metropolitan Areas – May 2013

Three of the seven metropolitan areas in Massachusetts—Leominster-Fitchburg-Gardner, Pittsfield, and Springfield—had wages significantly below the national average for police and sheriff's patrol officers, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported today. In fact, no metropolitan area in Massachusetts had wages that were significantly above the national average for this occupation. Regional Commissioner Deborah A. Brown noted that two metropolitan areas in Massachusetts, Barnstable and Boston-Cambridge-Quincy, had wages that were measurably above those for the nation for firefighters. Nationwide, the average (mean) wage for police and sheriff's patrol officers was \$58,720 and for firefighters, \$48,270. (See [table A](#). For comprehensive definitions of metropolitan areas in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, please see Technical Note.)

Table A. Average (mean) annual wages for police and sheriff's patrol officers and firefighters in the United States, Massachusetts, and metropolitan areas in Massachusetts, May 2013

Area	Police and Sheriff's Patrol Officers	Firefighters ¹
United States.....	\$58,720	\$48,270
Massachusetts	58,000	53,420*
Barnstable	56,700	56,510*
Boston-Cambridge-Quincy	59,320	56,730*
Leominster-Fitchburg-Gardner	55,010*	47,440
New Bedford.....	58,580	51,000
Pittsfield	53,360*	--
Springfield	51,640*	47,470
Worcester	58,660	47,910
-- Estimate not released.		
* The mean annual wage for this area is significantly different from the national average of all areas at the 90-percent confidence level.		
¹ Data for firefighters do not cover volunteer firefighters who are unpaid.		

The Boston area had 19,490 police and sheriff's patrol officers and firefighters, the largest number among the seven metropolitan areas. Springfield had employment of 3,100 and Worcester had employment of 2,820 in these two occupations. Employment levels for both police and sheriff's patrol officers and firefighters in each of the remaining four areas were 1,010 or below.

Table B. Employment for police and sheriff's patrol officers and firefighters in the United States, Massachusetts, and metropolitan areas in Massachusetts, May 2013

Area	Police and Sheriff's Patrol Officers	Firefighters ¹
United States.....	635,380	302,870
Massachusetts	16,480	12,070
Barnstable	520	490
Boston-Cambridge-Quincy	11,680	7,810
Leominster-Fitchburg-Gardner	270	340
New Bedford.....	--	320
Pittsfield	140	--
Springfield	1,680	1,420
Worcester	1,700	1,120
-- Estimate not released.		
¹ Data for firefighters do not cover volunteer firefighters who are unpaid.		

Wages for police and sheriff's patrol officers in metropolitan areas in Massachusetts

New Bedford, Boston-Cambridge-Quincy, and Worcester were among the higher-paying areas for police and sheriff's patrol officers at \$59,580, \$59,320 and \$58,660, respectively. Wages in these three metropolitan areas were not significantly different from the national average. Three areas had wages for police and sheriff's patrol officers that were measurably lower than the U.S. average, of which Springfield (\$51,640) and Pittsfield (\$53,360) were among the lower-paid.

Wages for firefighters in metropolitan areas in Massachusetts

Boston-Cambridge-Quincy (\$56,730) and Barnstable (\$56,510) were among the higher-paying areas for firefighters in the commonwealth. Wages in both of these areas were significantly higher than the national average of \$48,270. Leominster-Fitchburg-Gardner, Springfield, and Worcester were among the lower-paying areas for firefighters at \$47,440, \$47,470 and \$47,910, respectively. Wages in these three metropolitan areas were not significantly different from the national average.

These statistics are from the Occupational Employment Statistics (OES) survey, a federal-state cooperative program between BLS and State Workforce Agencies, in this case, the Massachusetts Department of Unemployment Assistance.

The OES wage data for police and sheriff's patrol officers and firefighters in the state and metropolitan areas were compared to their respective national averages based on statistical significance testing. Only those occupations with wages above or below the national wage after testing for significance at the 90-percent confidence level meet the criteria.

NOTE: A value that is statistically different from another does not necessarily mean that the difference has economic or practical significance. Statistical significance is concerned with the ability to make confident statements about a universe based on a sample. It is entirely possible that a large difference between two values is not significantly different statistically, while a small difference is, since both the size and heterogeneity of the sample affect the relative error of the data being tested.

Technical Note

The Occupational Employment Statistics (OES) survey is a semiannual mail survey measuring occupational employment and wage rates for wage and salary workers in nonfarm establishments in the United States. Guam, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands are also surveyed, but their data are not included in the national estimates. OES estimates are constructed from a sample of about 1.2 million establishments. Each year, forms are mailed to two semiannual panels of approximately 200,000 sampled establishments, one panel in May and the other in November. May 2013 estimates are based on responses from six semiannual panels collected over a 3-year period: May 2013, November 2012, May 2012, November 2011, May 2011, and November 2010. The overall national response rate for the six panels is 75.3 percent based on establishments and 71.6 percent based on employment. For more information about OES concepts and methodology, go to www.bls.gov/news.release/ocwage.tn.htm.

The OES survey provides estimates of employment and hourly and annual wages for wage and salary workers in 22 major occupational groups and 821 detailed occupations for the nation, states, metropolitan statistical areas, metropolitan divisions, and nonmetropolitan areas. In addition, employment and wage estimates for 94 minor groups and 458 broad occupations are available in the national data. OES data by state and metropolitan/nonmetropolitan area are available from www.bls.gov/oes/current/oessrcst.htm and www.bls.gov/oes/current/oessrcma.htm, respectively.

The May 2013 OES estimates are based on the 2010 Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) system and the 2012 North American Industry Classification System (NAICS). Information about the 2010 SOC is available on the BLS website at www.bls.gov/soc and information about the 2012 NAICS is available at www.bls.gov/bls/naics.htm.

Information in this release will be made available to sensory impaired individuals upon request. Voice phone: 202-691-5200; Federal Relay Service: 1-800-877-8339.

Metropolitan area definitions

The substate area data published in this release reflect the standards and definitions established by the U.S. Office of Management and Budget.

Barnstable Town, Mass. New England City and Town Area (NECTA) includes Barnstable city, Bourne town, Brewster town, Chatham town, Dennis town, Eastham town, Falmouth town, Harwich town, Marion town, Mashpee town, Orleans town, Sandwich town, Truro town, Wareham town, Wellfleet town, and Yarmouth town, MA.

Boston-Cambridge-Quincy, Mass.-N.H. New England City and Town Area (NECTA) includes applicable cities and towns in the following divisions: Boston-Cambridge-Quincy MA NECTA Division, Brockton-Bridgewater-Easton MA NECTA Division, Framingham NECTA Division, Haverhill-North Andover-Amesbury MA NECTA Division, Lawrence-Methuen-Salem MA-NH NECTA Division, Lowell-Billerica-Chelmsford MA-NH NECTA Division, Nashua NH-MA NECTA Division, Peabody MA NECTA Division, and the Taunton-Norton-Raynham MA NECTA Division.

Leominster-Fitchburg-Gardner, Mass. New England City and Town Area (NECTA) includes Ashburnham town, Ashby town, Fitchburg city, Gardner city, Leominster city, Lunenburg town, Phillipston town, Templeton town, Westminster town, and Winchendon town, MA.

New Bedford, Mass. New England City and Town Area (NECTA) includes Acushnet town, Dartmouth town, Fairhaven town, Freetown town, Gosnold town, Mattapoisett town, New Bedford city, and Rochester town, MA.

Pittsfield, Mass. New England City and Town Area (NECTA) includes Becket town, Cheshire town, Dalton town, Hancock town, Hinsdale town, Lanesborough town, Lenox town, New Ashford town, Peru town, Pittsfield city, Richmond town, Savoy town, Washington town, and Windsor town, MA.

Springfield, Mass.-Conn. New England City and Town Area (NECTA) includes Agawam city, MA, Ashfield town, MA, Belchertown town, MA, Blandford town, MA, Brimfield town, MA, Chester town, MA, Chesterfield town, MA, Chicopee city, MA, Cummington town, MA, Deerfield town, MA, East Longmeadow town, MA, East Windsor town, CT, Easthampton town, MA, Enfield town, CT, Goshen town, MA, Granby town, MA, Granville town, MA, Hadley town, MA, Hampden town, MA, Hatfield town, MA, Holyoke city, MA, Huntington town, MA, Longmeadow town, MA, Ludlow town, MA, Middlefield town, MA, Monson town, MA, Montgomery town, MA, Northampton city, MA, Palmer town, MA, Plainfield town, MA, Russell town, MA, Somers town, CT, South Hadley town, MA, Southampton town, MA, Southwick town, MA, Springfield city, MA, Suffield town, CT, Tolland town, MA, Wales town, MA, Ware town, MA, West Springfield town, MA, Westfield city, MA, Westhampton town, MA, Whately town, MA, Wilbraham town, MA, Williamsburg town, MA, Windsor Locks town, CT, and Worthington town, MA.

Worcester, Mass.-Conn. New England City and Town Area (NECTA) includes Auburn town, MA, Barre town, MA, Boylston town, MA, Brookfield town, MA, Charlton town, MA, Clinton town, MA, Douglas town, MA, Dudley town, MA, East Brookfield town, MA, Grafton town, MA, Holden town, MA, Holland town, MA, Hubbardston town, Lancaster town, MA, Leicester town, MA, Millbury town, MA, New Braintree town, MA, North Brookfield town, MA, Northborough town, MA, Northbridge town, MA, Oakham town, MA, Oxford town, MA, Paxton town, MA, Princeton town, MA, Putnam town, CT, Rutland town, MA, Shrewsbury town, MA, Southbridge town, MA, Spencer town, MA, Sterling town, MA, Sturbridge town, MA, Sutton town, MA, Thompson town, CT, Uxbridge town, MA, Webster town, MA, West Boylston town, MA, West Brookfield town, MA, Westborough town, MA, Woodstock town, CT, and Worcester city, MA.